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ABSTRACT

The fundamental shifts in thinking about communication theory and research that are suggested in the hermeneutic writing made available during the last decade are reviewed in this paper. The issues revieved include a consideration of hermeneutics as a philosophy of social science, the modern conception of textuality, and the status of interpretive research. The paper also discusses a research project involving metaphors and based on the premise that everyday discourse does not exclusively or even primarily function to transmit information or represent objects and events. (Author/FL)

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HERMENEUTICS, TEXTUALITY, AND COMMUNICATION RESEARCH

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HERMENEUTICS, TEXTUALITY, AND COMMUNICATION RESEARCH

Instead of presenting a technical paper here which would describe a narrow line of research, I have chosen to review the larger body of materials which contextualize my current research. I think this context is important for understanding most modern phenomenologically-based research. Phenomenology, let alone hermeneutics, is not well understood by researchers in this country and is usually omitted in American discussions of communication theory. The last paper I wrote for the Western States Speech Journal was rejected with a review that went something like this: "The paper seems sound and essentially correct but I doubt that more than a handful of our readers would understand it and they are all listed in the footnotes." I am sure others have received similar reviews. The fact that phenomenologists in speech communication have frequently written more for philosophers than for their disciplinary colleagues is only part of the reason for this, but is certainly lamentable in its own right. The primary works in hermeneutics are extremely difficult, and the basic concepts developed are counter to what has become our natural way of thinking. I believe that these "odd" concepts are a consequence of a commendable effort to work out new facets of human thought and avoid past prejudices. For the sake of understanding, however, they must be put in some relation to traditional thinking.

In this paper I will review the most fundamental of the shifts in thinking about communication theory and research which are suggested in the hermeneutic writings made available during the last decade.[1] The issues will include a consideration of hermeneutics as a philosophy of social science, the modern conception of textuality, and the status of interpretive

research. In the last section I will discuss a current research project. In following out these basic issues raised by modern hermeneutics I will unravel only one thread of a collection of modern positions which, when interwoven, are changing the fabric of social research.

HERMENEUTICS AS A PHILOSOPHY OF SOCIAL SCIENCE

Hermeneutics's claim as a, or even the, philosophy of social science is traced principally to Dilthey's writings in the late 19th century. In Dilthey's differentiation of the Geisteswissenschaften from the Naturwissenschaften, he looked to hermeneutics to establish the methodological guidelines for the new and categorically different human sciences. His work is important for the social sciences and particularly for the development of the "verstehen" operation in sociology. Yet his work uncritically placed hermeneutics in the same relation to the human sciences that the "positive" philosophies of science had to the natural sciences.[2] Philosophy was to be a handmaiden of science, clarifying and formalizing the work of the practicing scientist. Both the secondary role given to philosophical thinking and the emphasis on methodological issues of this work are reflected in my colleagues' interest in learning hermeneutic methods and the appropriate occasions of their use. My friends usually go away hungry and I, frustrated. They, because it gives them nothing new to do and I, because they don't understand that they have asked the wrong question. Modern hermeneutics does not offer a new set of methods or a new theory. Nor does the development of hermeneutics signal an impending paradigm shift. Heidegger in his attempt to recover philosophy from the philosophy of science--that is, to ask rather than to apply assumed answers to philosophical questions--saw what was at stake most clearly. The focus upon epistemological problems has clouded the more basic issue of ontology. Heidegger, in Being and Time, demonstrated that understanding is a mode

of being rather than knowledge--an ontological rather than epistemological problem. This "discovery" sets all our work in a different light.

Insight and Knowledge

Few would disagree that the basic goal of theory and research is the construction of knowledge. While there might still be disagreement over whether knowledge is discovered or created, and more disagreement over whether it leads to prediction and control or expanded human choice, the search for knowledge remains essentially unchallenged as the goal of science. Even when the hope is expressed that knowledge is complemented by wisdom, insight, and moral character, these are seen as necessary subjective additions which are not themselves raised in science.

The goal of knowledge predisposes social scientists to work and speak about their object of study in certain ways. These dispositions make possible rational agreement on important issues and aid the progressive character of their work. These dispositions include an appeal to transcendental foundations, a preference for "normal" discourse, an emphasis on presence and prediction, and an interested disinterest through the use of a scientific procedure. Each of these dispositions needs a brief description. 1) The appeal to transcendental foundations is an appeal to an external world (behavioral events), actor's meaning (cognitive structures, authorial intent), or universal thought (logic, ideas, essences). These appeals assure that theory and research will be grounded and that validity can be ascertained by reference to that upon which universal (or ready) agreement can be reached. 2) The preference for "normal" discourse refers not only to the "normative" research need for cognitive consensus on observational constructs prior to conducting research (for the sake of intersubjective validity), but more importantly to make science "positive" or cumulative.[3]

To become a normal science in Kuhn's sense is to get on with the productive work at hand. It assumes commensurability, the effortless comparison and sharing of results. 3) In their pursuit of knowledge, most social scientists have a propensity to see things, in Heidegger's terms, as "present at hand," emphasizing their qualities which are open to circumspection. This objectifying tendency is carried in the language-use preference for assertion and literal description. The assertion points out certain qualities of the thing and makes a predication. For the sake of objective knowledge the perception is lifted out of time and space. While few still believe in universal claims, most theoretical claims are treated as if they were universal for all practical purposes (for the social scientist). 4) Finally, one of the most recurrent debates concerns the value free/value laden nature of social science research. This debate presents both easy and difficult issues; most people, however, would agree with the following. The social scientist is interested in particular findings and their application; through agreed-upon procedures these interests are set aside in the practice of science; the procedures, concepts, and methods of science, however, have been developed historically by a particular cultural community and are filled with value claims; but, these values must be assumed rather reflected upon <u>in</u> the practice of science and due to legitimate ethnocentrism, they are rarely raised to the level of explicit reflection <u>outside</u> the practice of science.

While neither exclusive nor exhaustive, these dispositions underlie both traditional and new paradigmatic research in communication. I am not setting these dispositions up for attack or criticism. They are clearly entailed in the modern pursuit of knowledge and are essential for it. They are also the very dispositions which get displaced in the hermeneutic presentation of a complementary goal to knowledge for the social sciences. My characterization of knowledge-seeking social science is not a thinly veiled

attack but does make possible the consideration of other legitimate dispositions.

The common sense nature of these scientific dispositions and an alternative way of looking at what they must assume can be clarified by an example. If one encounters a rock when walking down a path, it might be seen as "hard," "beautiful," or "in the way." Are any of these more objective or certain? Clearly our first inclination is to say that hardness is an intrinsic quality of the rock and, thus, more objective and certain. But it takes little thought to recognize that "hardness" arises in the interaction between observer and observed. The fact that a particular group might readily agree concerning its hardness suggests that we have a highly normalized discourse based in standards of measurements, etc., about objects, particularly concerning their hardness. It does not place the quality in the object. This is not to take anything away from the rock nor to make it merely a joint fantasy. The rock has its qualities which will not be immediately changed whether one or all decide to describe it as hard (though such a change might alter what one chooses to do with it). To say this is no more than to say that the statement "beauty is in the eyes of the beholder" changes nothing about the fact that the rock has qualities which can be described as beautiful. While it may take considerably more talk to convince another that the rock is beautiful, this says more about the relative pre-agreement in discourse as to what counts as what than it does about the qualities of the rock. Talk about beauty could be normalized through explicit criteria and could become a science (e.g., the rating of diamonds). These criteria may reflect the appeal to our highly normalized "physicalistic" language as we construct knowledge about beauty, but we are still discussing the preference for certain kinds of talk, not intrinsic qualities of the object. All this to say that the dispositions of social scientists are based

in a preference founded on the goal of objective knowledge and are not based in fact.

What changes if we substitute a person for the rock (a social for natural science)? Nothing essential, apart from deep-seated prejudices. As Rorty expressed well:

> If we fail to discern the same virtues in Skinner as in Bohr, it is not because Skinner does not understand his pigeons or his people as well as Bohr understands his particles, but because we are, reasonably enough, suspicious of people who make a business of predicting and controlling other people. We think these particular virtues not appropriate for the situation. We think that there are more important things to find out about people than how to predict and control them, even though there may be nothing more important to find out about rocks, and perhaps even about pigeons. But once we say that what human beings are <u>in themselves</u> suits them to be described in terms which are less apt for prediction and control than Skinner's, we are off down the same garden path as when we say that what atoms are <u>in themselves</u> suits them to be described in terms which <u>are</u> apt for prediction and control. In neither case do we have the slightest idea what "in themselves" means. We are simply expressing a preference for predicting rocks over doing anything else with them, and a preference for doing other things with people over predicting their behavior.[4]

Knowledge can be constructed about people in the same way that it is about rocks. The social and natural sciences are not separable by a humanistic metaphysics. Yet a preference remains.

This preference can be represented by a second social science goal to complement that of knowledge. This goal is founded on what Gadamer in <u>Truth and Method</u> called <u>Bildung</u> or self-formation. For the lack of a better term I will call this goal "insight." The accomplishment of this goal involves the way we as social scientists and everyday people talk about ourselves. Gadamer, following the existentialists, suggested that redescribing ourselves is the most important thing we can do--self-formation rather than knowledge is the goal of thinking. I think we can seriously say this without falling to an updated version of "clothes make the man." In Rorty's

words: "To say that we become different people, that we ('remake') ourselves as we read more, talk more, and write more, is simply a dramatic way of saying that sentences which become true of us by virtue of such activities are often more important to us than sentences which become true of us when we drink more, earn more, and so on."[5] This point is not terribly new: Gergen clearly demonstrated the effect of social theory on human action nearly a decade ago.[6] Insight as a goal, however, must be understood in the modern philosophies rather than merely in a common way.

The inclusion of something akin to what I have called insight in nearly all modern positions is founded in two directions. First, by the phenomenological demonstration that a more essential level of knowing underlies all scientific research; and second, that there are many ways this fundamental level of knowing can be systematically described outside of traditional science. The goal of insight is not a statement of the irrational in contrast to the rational nor the subjective over the objective, as some humanists would have it. It is more basic than these contrasts: we are looking to a different set of questions and relations among persons, concepts, methods, and phenomena. The goal of insight does not attack the goal of knowledge or knowledge-producing activities but recontextualizes them. From the standpoint of insight, knowledge is seen as a means rather than an end. To cite Rorty further, "getting the facts right . . . is merely propaedeutic to finding new and more interesting ways of expressing ourselves, and thus of coping with the world."[7] It is not science that has been attacked by phenomenology and the post-phenomenologists, but the onesidedness and sometimes arrogance of scientists--the idea that science is a privileged activity.

The dispositions following from the goal of insight are fundamentally different from those of paradigmatic social science research. The appeal is to continued discourse and other expressions, to the <u>thickness</u> of inter-

pretation rather than to its external foundations. The preference is for abnormal--the struggle of concepts coming into expression--over normal discourse. The emphasis is on that which is expressed rather than that which is present, and the question becomes the preferred grammatical form, rather than the assertion. Analysis is seen as characteristically interested and filled with prejudice rather than disinterested.

The essential thrust of research with the goal of insight is different from that with knowledge as a goal. While knowledge is constructed with a forgetfulness of the historical conditions of its development and hopes to withstand time, insight is thoroughly historicized and subject to endless self-criticism. While knowledge is positive and cumulative, insight is critical and transformational. While knowledge presents truth, insight engenders practical wisdom. The contrasts are endless. My presentation of these contrasts identifies, in a most impressionistic manner, a long identified tension in Western thought. I do not wish to end this tension but wish to come to it again, to fill out its inner necessity and consequences.

Ontology and Epistemology

Heidegger's turn from classical hermeneutics and positive sciences hinged on the demonstration that the question of understanding was an ontological rather than epistemological problem. The philosophy of science has been dominated by epistemological concerns to the point where it is hard to conceive of it any other way. In fact it is fairly easy to see that the development of science has been largely dependent on the putting aside of arguments about the nature of the phenomena for the sake of inventing new methods of study. The tendency to assume, rather than discuss, the nature of phenomena has certainly been prevalent in the empiricist/positivist

tradition. What has developed is a type of procedural sublimation (Veblen's apt term) or method fetish (in the words of one of the conference participants).

In the emphasis on methodological issues, ontology has not been lost, but its questions have not been raised. Every epistemology assumes an ontology and most epistemological positions today are based in dead or passed over ontologies. Frequently the implicit ontologies directly clash with explicit claims about the nature of the phenomena. Nowhere is this clearer than in perception studies. The sense data theories of perception which underlie nearly all empirical methods have only remote similarity to modern theories of perception yet the empirical methods continue to be used to test these new theories, despite the obvious contradictions. Social science methods would be quite different if developed today out of modern theories. Similarly much of modern communication research is carried out under assumptions quite antithetical to modern concepts of communication. The reasking of ontological questions does not so much suggest new methods as enable them. The contribution of hermeneutics is not in presenting its classical methods but in regrounding all methodological concerns.

The potential impact of philosophical hermeneutics is nowhere greater than in the raising of the problem of human understanding to an ontological issue. The questions changes from <u>how can I come to understand</u>? to <u>how is understanding possible</u>? This change is critical for a philosophy of social science as the grounding of all forms of insight and knowledge. It is important for communication both in its making communication central to the philosophy of social science and in the resultant description of the communication process. Since I have discussed this change elsewhere I will not go into its implications here.[8]

The primacy of ontological questions over epistemological ones in these new writings is partially against method. In Gadamer's careful ontology of

understanding, truth (insight, understanding) eludes the methodical man. But this is not written against method as much as against an uncritical faith in it. It is not in the avoidance of method that truth is found; rather, in the careful application of method, insight exceeds the method as understanding arises. Hermeneutics does not offer a new method to acquire knowledge or understanding but establishes a preference for the phenomena over anything subjective, including methods and concepts.

The issues are much more basic than Hanson's and Kuhn's rather idealistic claims that "seeing is theory laden." Such a claim both says too much and too little. It says too much in that it suggests the concept is the outer limit of the phenomenon which does not allow sufficient integrity to the object. The formed object is an acknowledgement of the unity of subject and object but their analysis leaves the subject in control as if the perception is open to being freely conceptualized. It says too little in the sense that more than a particular theory or method is involved in perception: in it the whole tradition is brought to bear. "Seeing" is so thoroughly prejudiced that it cannot be escaped in meta-levels and meta-languages to totally reflect on it. The goal is the elimination of unwarrented prejudices with no expectation of total transparency. As Kochelmans suggested following Gadamer:

> Before our pre-judgements can ever become an epistemological problem, they are already an ontological fact, the facticity of our standing in a tradition which has already been handed down to us and on the basis of which we understand whatever we are able to understand. The basic epistemological problem for our finite understanding is therefore not a matter of discarding our prejudices in order to begin absolutely, but to distinguish between legitimate pre-judgements and pre-judgements which obstruct understanding. [9]

This is not intended to rule out current philosophies of science or research programs but suggests an important set of questions which can always be

raised in back of them. Rorty's dictum "never use hermeneutics where epistemology will do" is instructive as long as hermeneutic discourse is possible and turned to when needed.

Hermeneutics offers preparation for formulating concepts and methods in research. This derives from the fundamental ontological character of understanding. A philosophy of social science based in hermeneutics brings us again to thinking about methods in regard to what is being studied. The methodological canons based on this "new" ontology differ substantially from those used to support traditional social science research. While no new methods are presented, both a new understanding of old methods and the development of essentially new methods is made possible.

TEXTUALITY AND COMMUNICATION STUDY

The radical nature of the changes in the social sciences being effected by these new positions is clear in the development of modern text theory. In a broad sense language has replaced consciousness as the principal issue and more exactly it has replaced consciousness in philosophical writings. In each of the modern writers (i.e., Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Wittgenstein) the "turn" from a central consideration of experience, perception, and foundations to language has been evident. For the most recent writers (Foucault, Lacan, Derrida, Levinas) even this turn has been considered insufficient and too idealistic. In their writings, the text or text analogue has served as the ground for person, world, experience, and perception. The modern writers have leveled an extreme but potent attack on the traditional social sciences and on the corrections offered by phenomenology, structuralism, and humanistic hermeneutics. They have truly used phenomenology against itself to develop what are called "post structural" or "dialectic hermeneutic" critiques.

These positions radically questioned the foundations of Western thought particularly through a critique of the philosophy of presence. In their examination of space and time relations the knowability of the external world and the ability to definitively interpret a human act were ruled out. The philosophical origins for these positions rest in Neitzsche and the later Heidegger. Ijsseling described the position resulting from Neitzsche's writing in the following way: "subject and object, the I and reality, are only fictions and interpretations which are supported by a hidden will to power, effects or products of a transmitted grammar and an actually existing spoken and written word. This spoken and written word does not strive for adequation with the so-called reality but is a strategic maneuver to create order."[10]

A little philosophical development is necessary before the reasonableness of such an extreme position as well as its implications for communication study can be shown. In our common way of talking we speak of experience as something a defined subject has of an existing world in the here and now. It is from this that abstractions, theories and even fantasies are built. But as Derrida, Levinas, Foucault and Lacan, among others, showed in different but comparable ways, the "reality" we live in is not the one that is presumed present. The idea of a subject having an experience of the world is itself very abstract. Ijsseling has done an excellent job summarizing this difficult position.

> [T]hat which is present is continuously retreating. It escapes from the discourse while the discourse imposes itself as the true reality. Presence is either that for which one hopes, or that which one fears will occur, while behaving as if it is already there; or like that which is lost for good with only a trace left behind and which one tries continuously to restore or find again. The latter occurs by means of signs and symbols. These do not refer to something that is present but to other signs and symbols, as words in a dictionary refer to other words. What is meant is only that which is not present, and the world

> we live in is a framework of meanings. Reality is of the order of discourse or of the order of speaking and writing and of listening and reading.[11]

In one sense this says no more than that we live in a world of meaning or an interpreted reality, but when we say this we rarely take it very thoroughly or seriously. Because meaning and interpretation are treated as subjective and private processes, we can retain a privileged access to an objective world which can be understood in its own right. But if we see meaning and interpretation as social historical processes which precede any possible separation of the subjective from the objective and if the appeal is an appeal to a normalized description of reality rather than the world, the radical character of this work is clear. The subject does not do the interpreting but is found in an interpreted world. The subject is recovered from an interpreted world that is already changing as it is examined through the linguistic ability to reflect and ask who interpreted or acted, etc. In the reflective moves to "catch" the subject and object, the turn is never fast enough. An interpretation has already taken place. Speaking speaks not only information but a tradition, a tradition which carries along that which will be recovered as thought. All understanding, change of understanding, and predication is out of a preunderstanding (Heidegger's word), and every judgement is based in a prejudgement ("prejudice" in Gadamer's terms). The preunderstanding and prejudgement can never be raised to consciousness in their own right but only in terms of that which is understood or judged. The various procedures designed to overcome prejudice and enable a privileged access merely substitute new prejudices. The social scientist, like the everyday actor, is condemned to "backing into the future" (Merleau-Ponty's phrase).

While we can never get back to or outside of the meaningful interpreted

reality which is always becoming as we work and play, it leaves a "trace" or "mark" in the empirical world as it retreats. The book that is written, the tale that is told, the building that is built, the institution that is founded are reminders of an originary interpretive process which has passed away. They are in this sense not first empirical objects but texts. In reading them a recovery of meaning is attempted. They are not, however, new systems of signs which refer to the thoughts and wishes of a speaking, writing, building subject. Rather, as the words refer to other words in the system of differences which make a language, the text refers to other past and future texts. Since every reading is a new interpretation, each interpretation is an interpretation of an interpretation. The human world is a world of discourse; reality is described reality. The person is a composite of texts. Our being is an acquired being--a recovery of the story that is told. We live on the thickness of interpretation.

The recent emphasis on textuality and the materiality of the text has considerable consequences for the study of communication.[12] The process of communication is conceived as an interlacing of texts rather than speaker intentions. As Metz and Eco suggested, in nearly every case of communication we are not dealing with messages but a text. The text represents the result of coexistence of many codes.[13] The appeal for clarity can never be properly made outside the text (such as to reality or speaker/author intent) but only to prior and subsequent texts. Intertextuality replaces intersubjectivity as the possibility for continued interaction. The interplay of sign systems rather than interaction of psychological meaning is the core of the process.

In text theory the questions of concern focus on the structure and production of the text, or even more extremely the "structuration" rather than structure of the text. Every text is possible on the basis of other

texts and takes on significance in regard to them. If we accept this ontological foundation, all communication research is texting about texts. The researcher is in no better position than that of the everyday actor. The researcher has only arbitrary fixed points of reference. Researchers need to be as concerned with their own discursive formation as that of their subjects. The realist text is also produced.

We haven't even been very careful about the nature of texts in our communication analyses. For example, rarely do we study oral discourse; we study inscribed discourse. The essential differences between the nature of oral and transcribed discourse are familiar and treated in other places, but I've rarely seen them taken into account.[14] The emphasis on natural settings and video-taping expand the problems. There are only beginning explorations of what is really inscribed on the video tape.[15] Questions concerning the appropriate texts for communication study, how these texts are produced, and what effects they have are still much in need of analysis. Fortunately recent works on the analysis of literary and artistic "texts" are now being widely read.[16] But aside from the theoretical works in semiotics, Foucault's historical analyses, and Geertz's work in anthropology, the social sciences have been less influenced.

Interpretive Communication Research

The meta-theoretical and epistemological issues raised by these new writings set the stage for carefully developed interpretive research in communication. But the concept of "interpretive research" has been widely used to refer to and justify so many different things that it has little descriptive power. In other places Kockelmans and I have distinguished it on philosophical and methodological grounds from normative (positivistic, paradigmatic), phenomenological (essential structures as in Ihde and VanKaam),

and naturalistic (verstehen sociology) studies and described the implications of these differences.[17] Kockelmans has also spelled out methodological guidelines for interpretive research based on the traditional hermeneutic canons.[18] There is no need to repeat those positions here. Within the context of those works, interpretive research seems to be original and offer promise.

The more difficult problem has been in moving from these methodological foundations to the actual conduct of research. While most interpretative research will use standard quantitative and non-quantitative research methods understood in a broader and somewhat different sense, there should also be the development of new research approaches. Koch and I have worked at this in the organizational metaphor study discussed below and McGlone and I are currently working on testing and measurement procedures for social and educational program evaluation.[19]

Current Research Directions

My current work on metaphor with Sue Koch does not totally follow out the philosophical writings mentioned in this paper but is one way the basic sense of this work can be actualized in research. Essentially we argue that everyday discourse does not exclusively or even primarily function to transmit information or represent objects and events. Along with its obstensive reference to ideas, objects and events, a non-obstensive reference is made to the experiential world in which those ideas, objects and events make sense. Furthermore, not only is everyday talk dependent on this reference to a taken-for-granted background, it constantly produces this background as it takes place. Discourse both produces and reproduces the experiential structure in which it can take place. In our analysis of discourse we try to explicate this structure.

Following Heidegger and Gadamer, we do not feel it is useful to seek this structure as a property of the psychological processes of human actors. This structure is a manifestation of the very as structure of existence--the interpreted world in which actors as psychological beings find themselves. We are neither directly interested in an attempt at uninterpreted description of reality nor in actor's subjective meanings. This as structure is directly inscribed in the social features of talk. To describe the systematicity of talk is to present this structure in another form--to make it unfamiliar so it can be examined.

While there are many ways this structure might be described, we have found Lakoff and Johnson's recent discussion of the metaphorical nature of language use and experience to be productive.[20] In their detailed linguistic analysis, Lakoff and Johnson showed that the conceptualization of the world is largely dependent upon interlocking systems of metaphors. In their work the metaphor form A IS B represents the perception, conceptualization, and understanding of one subject or event in terms of another. The form A IS B is not arbitrary because metaphors display what they call "directionality:" a less clearly delineated object or event, A, is structured by the more clearly delineated experience of a second object or event, B. In the metaphor LIFE IS A GAME, particular experiential aspects of life are highlighted by the more clearly conceptualized and widely shared understanding of a game. Metaphor presents one way seeing as is possible. In the LIFE IS A GAME example, life comes to be seen as a game, with players, loser, good moves and strategies.

Lakoff and Johnson showed how systems of metaphors develop out of the most clearly delineated and shared life experiences. These include at least spatial orientations (up-down, in-out), ontological concepts arising in physical experience (entities, substances, persons), and structured activities

(eating, moving, seeing). From these experiences arise metaphorical concepts, which fall into three categories: orientational metaphors (e.g., control is up: "I have control over him."); ontological metaphors (e.g., the mind is a machine: "We're turning out new ideas every day."); and structural metaphors (e.g., understanding is seeing: "I see what you're saying."). The most basic of these metaphors have become sedimented through habitual use. Lakoff and Johnson called them "literal metaphors" to stress the point that while seeming literal, they depend upon a comparison between two different kinds of things. This literalness is the everyday derivative mode in which the seeing as, and the entire fore-structure which makes that possible, is covered up and forgotten.

One of the contexts in which we have used metaphor analysis is in exploring the nature of social realities in organizations. By isolating the metaphors occuring in everyday talk in organizations and casting them into the coherent structures Lakoff and Johnson describe, we have a data base from which we can explore the constitution of the organization's social reality. From this description we can discuss how organizational members conceptualize new events and more importantly we can demonstrate the prejudgements and limits of these prejudgements which naturally occur in the organization.

Without going into a lot of detail here explaining a particular organization, both the procedure for analysis and conclusions are difficult to present. For the sake of clarity allow me to reproduce a set of common examples which demonstrate how Lakoff and Johnson's treatment of metaphors can be used to describe the unified conceptual/experiential system underlying organizational thought and action. This is one way interpretive research can be conducted in organizations. Due to its wide use and centrality to

organizational life, the ORGANIZATION IS MACHINE metaphor is a good initial example.

The machine metaphor highlights the material-processor aspect of organizations and downplays structural change and humane ideation. It structures organizational experience of various activities, people and objects as input, power sources, interchangeable parts, breakdowns, and repairs. For example:

> "We need more input on that decision."
> "The whole company needs an overhaul (tuneup)."
> "Can you get this company running again?"
> "We're primed for a recession."
> "We've got to get this thing cranked out."
> "R and D needs retooling."

A sensitive observer overhearing organizational members talking in this way would have a good intuitive sense of how members experience life in the organization. This intuitive sense arises out of the observer's background understanding (fore-structure) which makes possible the identification of the theme which ties the metaphors together, i.e., the overriding MACHINE metaphor. The sense of metaphors "hanging together" is referred to as "internal systematicity." Our analysis describes this coherence, thus, explicating what would otherwise be left to the intuition of the observer.

Internal systematicity is demonstrated by labeling the main metaphor (e.g., ORGANIZATION IS MACHINE) which integrates the particular occasions of metaphor use by members. In the ORGANIZATION IS MACHINE metaphor, the members' experience of the organization is structured by their shared and more clearly delineated understanding of machines. Members' experience of machines (which includes such things as what machines are, what can be done with them, how to fix them and so forth) is used to structure the as-yet-less-clearly-delineated experience of organizations. The conceptual power of the metaphor comes from this "directionality." The use of a metaphorical expression is made possible and has its power by a non-ostensive reference

to the main metaphor and the entire conceptual schema which structures experience with its use.

The example metaphor, ORGANIZATIONS ARE MACHINES, can be used to draw together expressions by which shared experience of machines can be seen to structure organizational experience.

Main Metaphor: ORGANIZATION IS MACHINE

1) shared understanding: machine has interlocking parts

organizational entailment: organization has interlocking parts

metaphors evidencing entailment:

"Everything is going like clockwork."
"He really threw a wrench into the works."
"Their timing is off."
"Something is in the wrong gear."

2) shared understanding: friction is created as machines work

organizational entailment: friction is created as organizations work

metaphors evidencing entailment:

"Here comes the rub."
"We're burning ourselves out."
"We'd better slow down and cool off."
"We're going to wear him down."
"Sparks fly when the boss shows up."

A number of metaphors may structure the members' experience of the organization and the events in it. In addition to ORGANIZATION IS MACHINE an organization might be seen as FAMILY, GAME, BUILDING, or PERSON. Each metaphorical system highlights certain aspects of organizational reality and together they provide a rich structure for that reality. The shared entailments of the main metaphors used by an organization compose an "external systematicity" of metaphor use. External systematicity demonstrates areas of experiential integration.

To illustrate external systematicity, we need to introduce a second example. ORGANIZATION IS ORGANISM is another possible main metaphor. This

metaphor characterizes the organization as a living, moving being. The shared understanding of "living beings" allows members to structure organizational experiences in terms of this more clearly delineated understanding of organisms. For example:

> "Circulate that memo to department heads."
> "We need to keep growing or die."
> "A good organization needs a heart and soul as well as a mind."
> "Low morale is a cancer which can engulf us all."
> "We have to treat this problem if the organization is to survive."

Entailments of this main metaphor can also be worked out:

Main Metaphor: ORGANIZATION IS ORGANISM

shared understanding: organisms have a survival instinct

organizational entailment: organizations have a survival instinct

metaphors evidencing entailment:

> "We'll sacrifice sales now to make it through the spring slump."
> "We have to change images to survive."
> "We have to let these workers go to save the company."
> "Product X is starving for ad support."

Both ORGANIZATION IS MACHINE and ORGANIZATION IS ORGANISM highlight different aspects of experience and lead members to experience in different manners. But there are also areas in which our experience of organisms and machines are quite similar. Both require energy and both are bounded entities which process materials. These similarities provide the basis for the shared entailments which constitute external systematicity. The shared entailments allow members to talk about certain aspects of the organization using either or both (mixed) metaphors. For example:

Main metaphors: ORGANIZATION IS MACHINE
ORGANIZATION IS ORGANISM

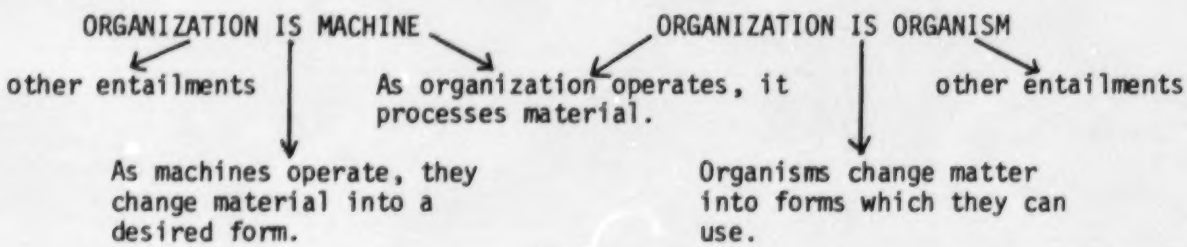
shared understandings: organisms are material processors
machines are material processors

mutual organizational entailments: organizations are material processors

metaphors evidencing mutual entailment:

> "We have to digest those statistics in order to turn out a reasonable decision."
> "Accounting is searching for more input on that."

Each metaphor structures certain aspects of the member's experience, yet neither is reducible to the other. For example, ORGANIZATION IS MACHINE emphasizes the interchangeability of parts of the organization; ORGANIZATION IS ORGANISM does not allow for such easy substitutions. Shared entailments provide the coherence between the metaphors in play. Metaphors analysis can generate a "map" showing these connections.


ORGANIZATION IS MACHINE
ORGANIZATION IS ORGANISM
other entailments
As organization operates, it processes material.
other entailments
As machines operate, they change material into a desired form.
Organisms change matter into forms which they can use.

Novel metaphors arise out of this background network of literal metaphors. They can be new ways of indicating the experiential structure (e.g., ORGANIZATION IS PERSON) already in play: "The company went on its hands and knees to its stockholders." Novel metaphors can also be seen to be extensions of existing main metaphors into new realms of entailments: "The organization, not taking government threats seriously, just batted its eyelashes and continued to flirt with the law." Occasionally new main metaphors appear: "The firm dribbled along aimlessly, eddying in small pools but never really reaching the main stream." Novel metaphors that seem to capture more essentially the continuing experiences of members become sedimented with use and form increasingly rich structures for subsequent organizational experience.

Actual metaphor analyses are not this simple. Metaphors such as

ORGANIZATION IS MACHINE are complexes of simpler metaphors which structure our experience of machines. It is possible to break these complexes into more basic ontological, structural, and activity metaphors described by Lakoff and Johnson. In a study involving only 90 minutes of taped conversation and 20 pages of intra-organizational memos, Koch isolated over 400 metaphorical expressions. Most of these fell into one of three main metaphors; the rest were distributed over a number of less central metaphors. Almost all expressions contained mixed metaphors, which allowed for a rich display of the interconnections of the metaphors in play. This preliminary study was carried out to investigate the general metaphors of an organization, although this method is ultimately designed to be used to help solve particular organizational problems. The thoroughness with which the metaphor chains are followed out and their relationships are explicated will depend upon the particular purpose of the analysis.

The ORGANIZATION IS MACHINE example is an illustration of what would go into a metaphor analysis, so we have stressed metaphors which structure conceptualizations of the organization as a whole. In a real organizational setting, analysis focusing upon a particular organizational problem, such as decision building, would describe in detail the metaphors in operation. For example, Smith described the implications of the machine metaphor when applied to communication.[21] Conceptualizing communication difficulties as "breakdowns" leads to particular kinds of solutions and precludes consideration of others. Organismic conceptions highlight other aspects of the communicative experience which lend themselves to other kinds of solutions.

We see much potential for this type of research in other contexts. For example, we are just beginning analyses of negotiation discourse looking at labor management mediation. Here we wish to see if and how metaphors shift through discussion. Is there covergence in successful mediation?

Are novel metaphors invented to link different metaphorical structures? And further, what metaphors are used to conceptualize the negotiation process itself? BUILDING and JOURNEY metaphor structures are widely used to conceptualizing the argument process. Does their use limit other thoughts and actions in the process? We hope to expand such analyses until we have a cross-section of everyday talk contexts, then, to explore the systematicity across contexts.

Summary

In this paper I have tried to adequately sketch the methodological and meta-theoretical foundations for interpretive research in communication. The questions being asked in this line of work are essentially different questions focusing on the intrinsic character of the subject matter rather than assuming their nature and conducting methodical work. The goals of this research are also clearly different. Interpretive research methods are not aimed at adding new facts to a cumulative base of knowledge. Rather they are intended to situate or contextualize those bases of knowledge by explicating the implied possibilities inherent in current situations and endeavors. The "insight" generated in the analysis is an intregral part of the ongoing process of self-criticism and self-production appropriate to this view of the relation of social science to human action and society.

With the recent discussions of "textuality," research is removed from the concern with correspondence theories. The systematicity of inscribed discourse replaces concern with psychological processes as the focus of analysis. In our metaphor studies, we are deconstructing a meaning complex which has been produced and is reproduced in everyday talk. Through analysis everyday conceptions become unfamiliar and can be made the object of explicit consideration and discussion. The value of this analysis, then is not in

its prescriptive power, but in its potential ability to bring more productive or interesting possibilities to conceptualization. The analysis can both expose conditions of communication which lead to invalid or unproductive consensus as well as generate novel consensus foundations.

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